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## Team Handbook



2012/2013 Season





## Sync or Swim Team Handbook

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## Welcome to the City of Torrance Sync or Swim Synchronized Swim Team!

Welcome, returning swimmers, new swimmers and all the families to the Sync or Swim Synchronized Swim Team 2011/2012 season. This is going to be a great year and I am excited that I get to share in it with you. The synchronized swim program offers an opportunity to learn new and different things, make new friends, and have new experiences. The City of Torrance Recreation Services Division is very proud of this team and all their accomplishments.

In addition to our competitions we do three recitals during the year to showcase our Synchronized Sunday Swimmers, our competitive teams, solos, duets and trios. This year our first recital will be held on December 4, 2011.

Our team will participate in four to six meets and we are hoping to make it to the Cactus Invitational. This meet is held in Arizona and is a lot of fun. Our team has competed there for several years, but not in the last few, so we are hoping to make it this year, but it will be a big team effort to get there.

Just to let you know how our synchronized swim program works, the SOS team at this time is comprised of three Novice teams and an Intermediate team. The team meets three times a week for practice and encourages the athletes to stretch and work on flexibility on their off days. This is the competitive area of the team and swimmers are expected to participate in at least two of the three practices a week and the competitions with their teammates.

Our team also offers Synchro Sunday. These classes only meet once a week to teach basic fundamentals and figures of the sport. This is a part of the team that offers both recreational opportunities as well as an entry point to our competitive teams and at the end of each session they participate in a recital with the team.

We want the girls to learn and they do, but we also want them to have a good time while they learn so we have added some new programs, ideas and fun activities to introduce to our girls to different aspects of being an aquatic athlete.

To accomplish the goals we have set for our team we would like all our athletes and their families to take the time to familiarize themselves with this information and guidelines in this handbook. By understanding the needs of the team and following the guidelines, we can all help ensure that the season runs smoothly for all athletes, families, and the coaches and that we can have a fun and successful season.

So once again I want to welcome you to the team! I know this will be an exciting and fun year for everyone. I look forward to being a part of SOS, and I know you will too.



Patti Goldenson

## Mission Statement for Torrance Sync or Swim Synchronized Swim Team:

Our Mission is: to provide a positive and enjoyable experience for the team members. To provide an atmosphere dedicated to enhancing the spirit and athleticism of the sport of synchronized swimming that encourages all team members equally and demonstrates the values of sportsmanship and personal improvement.

## Sports Policy & Philosophy

COACHES COACH, SWIMMER SWIM AND PARENTS CHEER!

Coaches, officials, administrators and parents must create an environment in which competitors achieve this ultimate objective: developing into true athletes, strong in their values for fitness, health, sportsmanship, self respect, and respect for others.

The purpose of sports programs is to use competition as a tool for learning the life long values of goal setting and hard work for reward. The athletes should learn to accept winning with humility and defeat with dignity and strive to try harder.

So it is important to remember: COACHES COACH, SWIMMERS SWIM AND PARENTS CHEER!

## Team Goals/Vision

It is extremely important for the team to have a vision of where they want to be and the goals to help them get there. These are the goals for the 2011/1012 season:

- To provide a healthy and encouraging environment for all swimmers.
- To enhance team spirit, support, and focus.
- To improve on individual skills as well as team performance.

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- To provide instruction at all levels of synchronized swimming, and to find a place in our program for all interested and committed participants.
- To develop the skill of teamwork, while instilling team values of commitment, discipline, humility, respect and self esteem.
- To promote the sport of synchronized swimming through competition, publicity, education and community awareness.
- To instill values of healthy living by focusing on physical strength, endurance, proper nutrition and the emotional well-being of all athletes.
- To challenge each athlete to perform to her own highest level of ability—physically, mentally and emotionally.

## Coach Responsibilities

### Coaches Coach

1. Coaching to improve all skills in synchronized swimming
2. Encouraging the athletes to boost self-confidence
3. Constructive criticism delivered in a positive and nurturing manner
4. All synchronized swimming classes and teams
5. Non-competitive performances
6. Meets at home and away
7. Training and practice sessions
8. Behavior policies
9. Calendar of events
10. Meet entries
11. All team-related policies

## Athletes Responsibilities

### Swimmers Swim

1. Attend 2 workouts weekly in which an honest effort is made to improve upon swimming technique and endurance.
2. Respect for all coaches and teammates.
3. Attend synchro meets as advised by coach.
4. Arrive at workouts ON TIME prepared with: goggles, towel, nose clip and other equipment as assigned by the coach.
5. Follow guidelines set forth by the coaches for behavior during meets and workouts.
6. Attend SOS social functions, i.e. parties, fun-days, fundraisers, etc...
7. When using locker rooms keep them clean and turn off showers. No food in locker rooms and do not bring valuables.
8. Assist coaches in pool clean-up.
9. Wear team suit and cap at meets, use practice suits for workouts.
10. Check the Synchro board and e-mail regularly for announcements and meet information.



## Parent's Responsibilities

### Parents Cheer

1. Make sure athletes arrive on time for meet warm ups, even if their figure and routine time is later in the day.
2. Responsible for establishing an appropriate "lights-out" time and making sure that your athlete(s) adhere to it and get enough rest. The athletes need to be awake in the morning to provide enough time for breakfast and knocking.
3. Preparing athletes for competition.
4. Being available to help with meet duties: score recording, running scores, etc.
5. Parents need to work with coaches to ensure optimal coordination for the entire group.

## Communication to and from Coaches and Staff

Coaches would like to have an open channel of communication with both the athletes and their families. If there are any team concerns, we hope you will feel free to raise them directly with your coach or the head coach. We want this team to be strong and the program to last, so we need to know if there is a problem or concern that we can work our. We want all of our athletes to have a wonderful experience.

## Written Communication

All written communication will come to you by e-mail. Almost anything that is sent by e-mail will also be put up on the SOS web page as well as on the bulletin board in the Plunge lobby. If you don't have an e-mail address please let your coach know.

Some of the things you will receive via e-mail will be:

- Monthly Calendars
- Upcoming meets and clinic information
- Schedules and announcements
- -Meet form with directions, information and schedules



In order for team communication to succeed on all levels, please check the bulletin board in the Plunge lobby regularly and your email daily. Coach's contact information can be found in the back of this handbook.

The Web Address for the Sync or Swim Team:

<http://www.torrance.ca.gov/Parks/19188.htm>

## Team Practices

Team members are expected to attend at least two of the three scheduled practices per week. In synchronized swimming it is important to practice in the water with your team mates to perfect the synchronization of your routine, but we understand that sometimes it is necessary to miss several practices, if that is the case then please notify the coach via email, phone call, or text. (Coaches contact info is noted at the end of the handbook.)

Coaching time is limited. When coaches specify a starting time for practice, athletes should be ready to work at that time, not arriving at that time. Please come appropriately attired in athletic clothes (Bring your sneakers, no jeans allowed, etc).

## USS Synchro

All SOS members must also belong to the United States Synchronized Swimming, Inc., synchro's national governing body, which has organized synchronized swimming competitions according to a series of several different tracks. From beginning level to most advanced, these tracks are Novice, Intermediate, Age Group, Junior, and Senior. On the SOS team we offer three of the five tracks: Novice, Intermediate and Age Group. Separate from these tracks, competitions are also held at the Collegiate and Masters (adult) levels. Competitions for different groups are held at the Association (local), Regional, Zone, and National levels.

## Membership

All team members are required to have an INTRODUCTORY ATHLETE MEMBERSHIP with the USS Synchro association. <http://www.usasynchro.org/>





In 2011, the fee for a membership was \$45.00. Please note that you must create a customer account prior to signing up.

## Meals and Nutrition

### *Water*

Please bring water bottles to every practice! Even while in the water, athletes perspire in need to replenish liquids. Proper hydration can also help decrease cramping and fatigue.

Please be aware carbonated drinks (soda, seltzer water, etc.) can severely degrade your ability to sustain you underwater activity. Coaches recommend that athletes limit carbonated drinks during the entire season. Carbonated beverages will not be allowed at practice.

### *Meals Before Practices*

Please ensure that athletes have a healthy snack before coming to practice, with enough time to digest food before working out. No snack machine before practice!

### *Meals at Meets*

A cooler with healthy snacks for the athlete should be arranged for meets whenever logistically possible.



## Team Uniform

The team considers it important that athletes appear in a neat, easy-to-recognize uniform. The SOS Team uniform consists of long black pants, black shorts, and team black and pink jacket with identifying logo. Also for meets swimmers must wear a black suit and white cap. New team members will have the opportunity to purchase team uniforms at the beginning of the season.

Coaches will provide athletes with directions on what parts of the uniform are expected to be worn at particular occasions.

## Meets

Synchronized swimming is primarily a team sport. As team members, athletes are expected to participate in all required meets. If an athlete misses a meet, this challenges the other swimmers, as choreography has to be altered. If necessary to miss a meet please let the coach know ASAP.

Coaches will provide athletes and families with the schedule of meets at the beginning of the season. Coaches expect athletes to notify the coaches if they or their family can foresee any conflicts.

## Conduct at Meets

When we are at meets, we are not only representing ourselves, but also our organization and our city. We expect the athletes and their families to be respectful and encouraging to all athletes and teams.

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## Schedule at Meets

As a team, we need to ensure that the time at meets is spent productively. A coach will provide a schedule for each meet, telling athletes when they are expected to arrive. Once at the meet, coaches will let athletes know what they are expected to do and when (i.e. land drilling, hair gelling, pep talks, etc.). Family help is appreciated, but please respect the schedules that have been set by the coach, as those schedules have been developed by the Association. The meet sets the schedule and the coaches and team need to abide by it.

## Traveling and Arrangements

We expect to make team arrangements for any meet that requires an overnight stay. We will plan to stay in the same hotel and, if flying, will attempt to travel as a team.

Parents are expected to be 'food parents' and 'chaperones'. If a family member cannot accompany the athlete to a meet, the athlete's parents are expected to seek another attending parent to accept responsibility for their athlete.

The athlete's parent is also responsible for obtaining all of the needed information regarding meet schedules, coordinators/ group's contact info and group itinerary, as well as to provide all needed information regarding their athlete (i.e. medications, or other medical needs, etc.).

During the planning of these trips, coaches and coordinators will welcome any input on preferences and needs from athletes and their parents. Once decisions have been made we expect everyone to support the coordinators efforts.



## Home Meets

The team expects to host one meet on average every year, usually the first meet of the season (figure meet).

We expect one or more of the adults from each family to help run this meet.

## What to Pack for a Meet

You should plan to wear at least your team jacket when arriving at a competition; coaches will inform you if other parts of the uniform should be worn.

Please label ALL of your swimsuits with your name "Torrance SOS", so that any lost items can be returned as quickly as they are found.

### Things to bring:

- Black suit and white cap
- Team suit and pink cap
- Goggles and nose clips (at least 3 nose clips)
- Team uniform- pants, shorts, and jacket
- Make up- waterproof
- Knocking supplies- brush, knock comb, elastics, bobby pins, hair nets, donuts, towel, knock, etc.
- Radio/ ipod for land drilling
- Extra warm up suit
- Plenty of towels
- Bags for wet items
- Toiletries
- Any medications
- Healthy snacks/ lunch
- Water
- A positive attitude!

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## Knoxing Hair

For routine meets, the swimmer's hair must be up in a bun. In order for the hair to stay in place without a cap during routines, unflavored Knox gelatin is used to coat the hair. This is a relatively simple process.

You should have the following items:

- Knox unflavored gelatin (found in most grocery stores)
- A cup for mixing
- Plastic fork for mixing
- Comb
- Old towel
- Bobbypins
- Hair elastics
- Hair net
- Painter/ pastry brush
- Hair donut- optional (found at beauty supply stores)

Step 1: Put the hair in a high ponytail. If the hair is very thick, sometimes it is easier to put in a braid, or to make 2 or 3 of equal size. Wrap the braid around the base of the ponytail to form a bun. Secure with lots of bobby pins, or hair tie.

Step 2: Take the hair net, cover the bun, twisting and re-covering until it is tight, pin with lots of bobbypins. The bun should be tight but not too uncomfortable!

Step 3: Put old towel around athlete's shoulders (this is to catch the drips of the Knox, if it hits skin and dries it is very painful to remove).

Step 4: Mix 2 packages of the Knox with approximately 1/2 cup of hot water, the hotter the water, the better the mix/ consistency. Start with less water and then add until the consistency is right... about the consistency of paint.

Step 5: With the paint/ pastry brush, brush on the Knox mixture onto hair a section at a time. Use the comb to apply it underneath the top layer of the hair. Above the nape of the neck, insert two X's using bobby pins to keep the hair in place. Once the entire head is done, do a quick final coat with the brush. Brush to saturate the entire but with the Knox mixture. Time is of the essence during this step, as the gel hardens and becomes lumpy as it cools and becomes more difficult to work with.

Please note: Most pools will NOT allow athletes to wash out their gelled hair in their showers as with so many swimmers, it may clog up their pipes.



## Synchro Terms

Back layout: A position in which the body is extended with the face, chest, thighs and feet at the surface of the water. The head hips and ankles should be in line.

Back pike: A position in which the body is bent at the hips to form a 45- degree angle or less and the legs and trunk extended, with the back straight and the head in line.

Ballet leg: A position where one leg is extended perpendicular to the water surface, with the body in a back layout position.

Ballet leg double: A position where the legs are together and extended perpendicular to the water surface, with the face at the surface.

Boost: A rapid, headfirst rise out of the water, aiming to raise as much of the body as possible above the surface.

Crane: A position where the body is extended in a vertical position with one leg extended forward at a 90- degree angle.

Deck work: The mood- setting moves that swimmers perform on the deck once the music starts before they enter the water.

Degree of difficulty: A weighting applied to a particular figure for scoring purpose in a figure competition.

Eggbeater: A rotary action of the legs used to support and propel the upper body in an upright position, leaving the arms free.



Figure: A combination of body positions and transitions performed in a prescribed manner.

Flamingo: A position where one leg is extended perpendicular to the surface while the other leg is drawn to the chest, with the lower leg parallel to the surface and the face at the surface.

Free routine: A routine where the choreography and choice of music is completely free.

Lift: When one or more swimmers gives support to lift another swimmer (or more) above the surface of the water.

Pool pattern: The path a swimmer takes through the water.

Required elements: Eight to ten fixed figures or other requirements which must be performed by all participants in a Technical Routine session.

Routine: A composition of strokes, figures and parts thereof, choreographed to music. It is judged on both technical merit and artistic impression.

Skill: A movement of the hands designed to apply continuous pressure against the water to propel, balance and support the body.

Technical merit score: The score given by each judge in panel one for execution, synchronization and difficulty.

Technical routine: A routine which contains required elements woven into the choreography. Competitors are free to choose the music they perform to.



Walkout front: A move where, starting in the split position, the front leg is lifted in a 180- degree arc over the surface to meet the other leg in a surface – arch position, and with continuous movement an arch to back layout is executed.